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RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT 1835
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA 3009

C O N F I D E N T I A L ALGIERS 000958

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/03/2017
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [AG](#)
SUBJECT: TO BE ALGERIAN AND GAY

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Thomas F. Daughton;
reasons 1.4 (b, d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Articles 333 and 338 of Algeria's penal code criminalize public homosexual behavior and there is no specific legal protection of homosexuals in the country. In a July 2 meeting held at the headquarters of Algerian NGO AIDS Algerie, five young members of Algeria's male homosexual community told poloff the articles are never enforced and the country accepts homosexuals, as long as their sexual activity is private. They added that sex and sexuality are considered private issues for all Algerians, regardless of sexual orientation. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) The five young men, all of whom lived with their parents, told poloff it was possible to live a homosexual life in Algeria, but "in an Algerian context." They named several gay-friendly venues in Algiers, spoke of transgendered acquaintances and mentioned knowing older gay individuals, but also said that Algerian homosexuals did not publicize their sexual orientation because it was not culturally acceptable. Not all had revealed their sexual orientation to their parents or family members. They also said that Algerian society was evolving, making an alternative lifestyle more acceptable. Important to this evolution, they said, were growing internet and satellite television access, which connects Algerians to the rest of the world.

¶3. (C) All denied they faced overt discrimination because of their sexuality, although not all were open about their sexuality. One openly gay member of the group said he lost friends when he initially came out of the closet, but shortly thereafter found a group of friends that provided a support network. He added that a female police officer randomly asked him if he was gay, to which he responded affirmatively and was told, "That is your choice. You are a victim."

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Algerian society tolerates homosexuality, as long as it remains largely out of sight. Given cultural taboos and severe legal penalties still on the books (though apparently rarely if ever enforced), homosexuality is more prevalent than meets the eye, from the most liberal to the most conservative elements of society. The five young men from AIDS Algerie, all non-practicing Muslims, said they faced no problems being gay, noting they frequented gay-friendly venues and had gay friends. One even said he had a gay friend who was a married imam.
DAUGHTON